

# Baby Caregivers

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) - New research has proven that ordinary activities such as rocking your baby, playing peek-a-boo, and singing lullabies help babies learn. By doing these type of activities with your infant, you are laying the foundation for brain development that leads to life-long talents and capabilities. For working parents, these discoveries make the choice of a child care provider an even more important one. When choosing child care, take time to visit several to see if:

- the caregiver spends time holding, cuddling, and rocking infants.
- simply games, like peek-a-boo, are played regularly.

- there are a variety of things to observe and bright rooms with colorful objects to view.

- there is verbal interaction with infants. Infants need to be talked to, sung to, and read to. Telling simple stories and reciting childhood poems are ways to expose an infant to language.

- stories are read often, at least once a day or more. This is an important factor to help infants be ready to learn.

- the caregiver is aware that every infant learns and develops skills at his own pace. There is no right or wrong time-frame. For example, learning the skills needed to walk can take anywhere from 8 months to 15 months and learning language skills varies greatly from child

to child.

- there are chances for exercise to strengthen muscles and help coordination. These are as simple as placing the baby on her stomach so she'll lift her head. Putting her on a blanket on the floor will encourage arm and leg movement and reaching for toys.

- the provider is willing to coordinate feeding schedules, bottles, and solid foods with what you and your infant's health care provider recommend for your child.

When selecting child care for an infant, choosing the right caregiver is most important, but the place where care is provided is important, too. Things to look for include the following:

- a clean, bright, cheerful home or center.
- an area where infants can

be safe while they look at things and exercise. This can be a blocked-off area where babies can be placed on a clean blanket and be safe to watch other children who may be running and playing.

- bright colorful things to observe at eye level for babies.

- cribs, safety gates, and highchairs that meet safety standards.

- age appropriate playthings. These should be simple and safe.

- a place to post schedules and important notes for parents and caregivers.

Once you have chosen the right place for your child, make sure that your caregiver knows about the free educational materials available from Penn State Cooperative Extension's Better Kid Care Program. For information or to order materials, call 1-800-452-9108.



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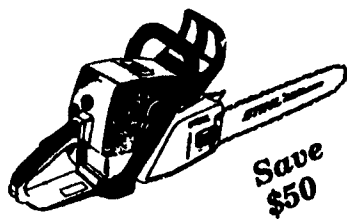
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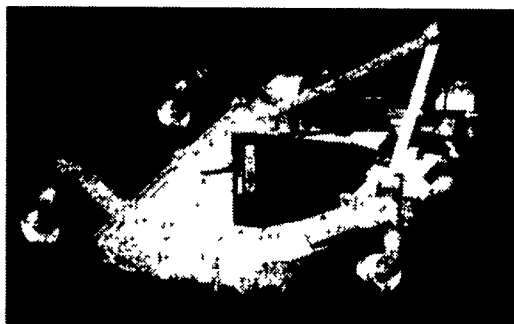
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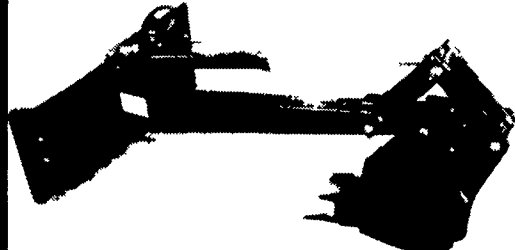
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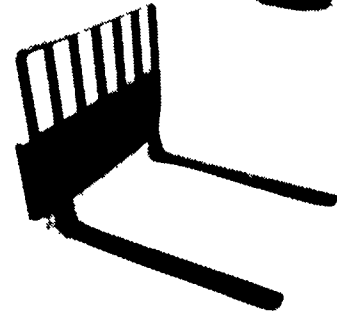


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